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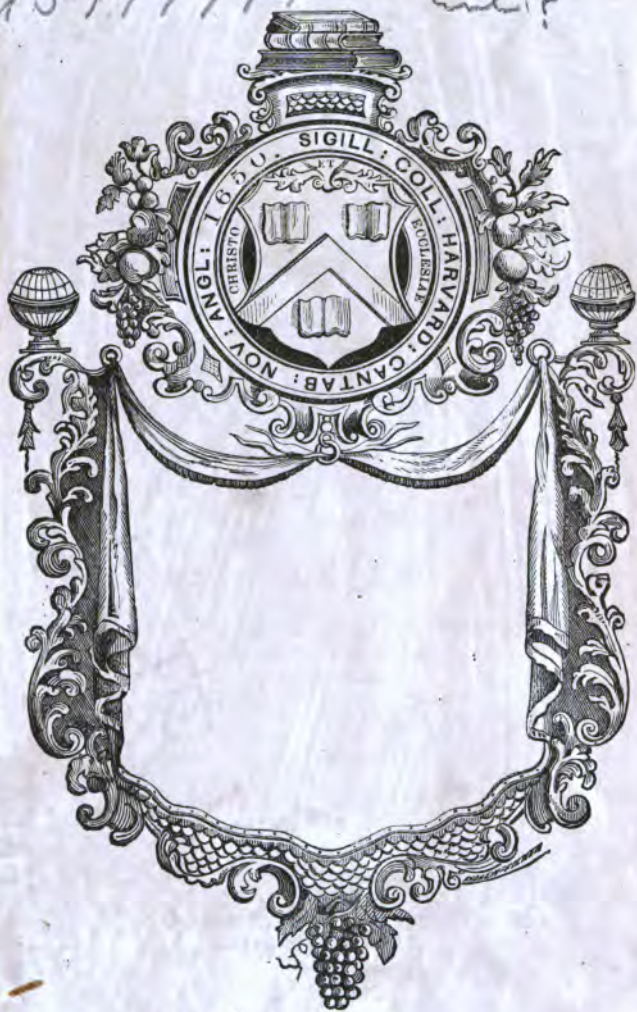
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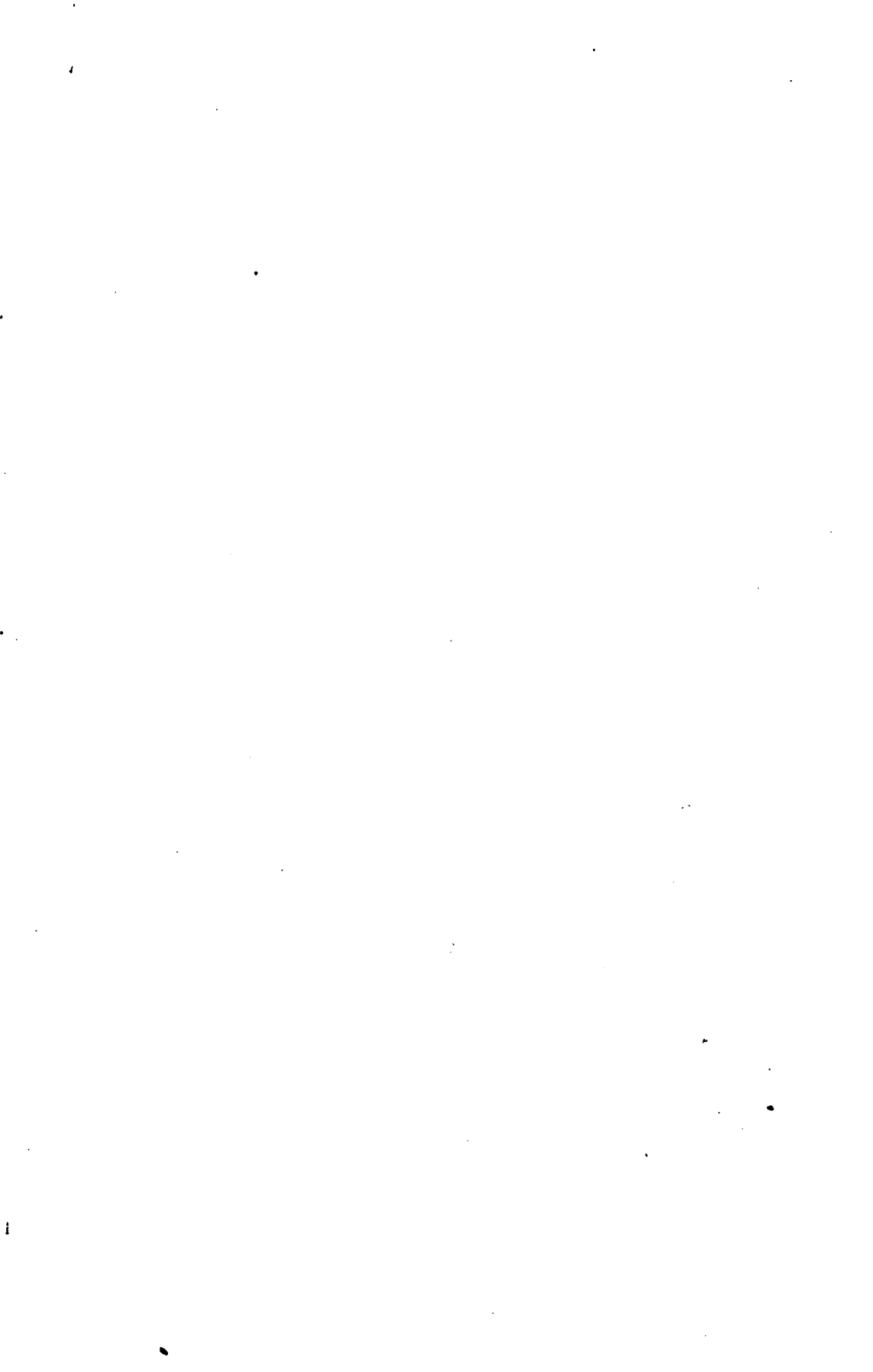


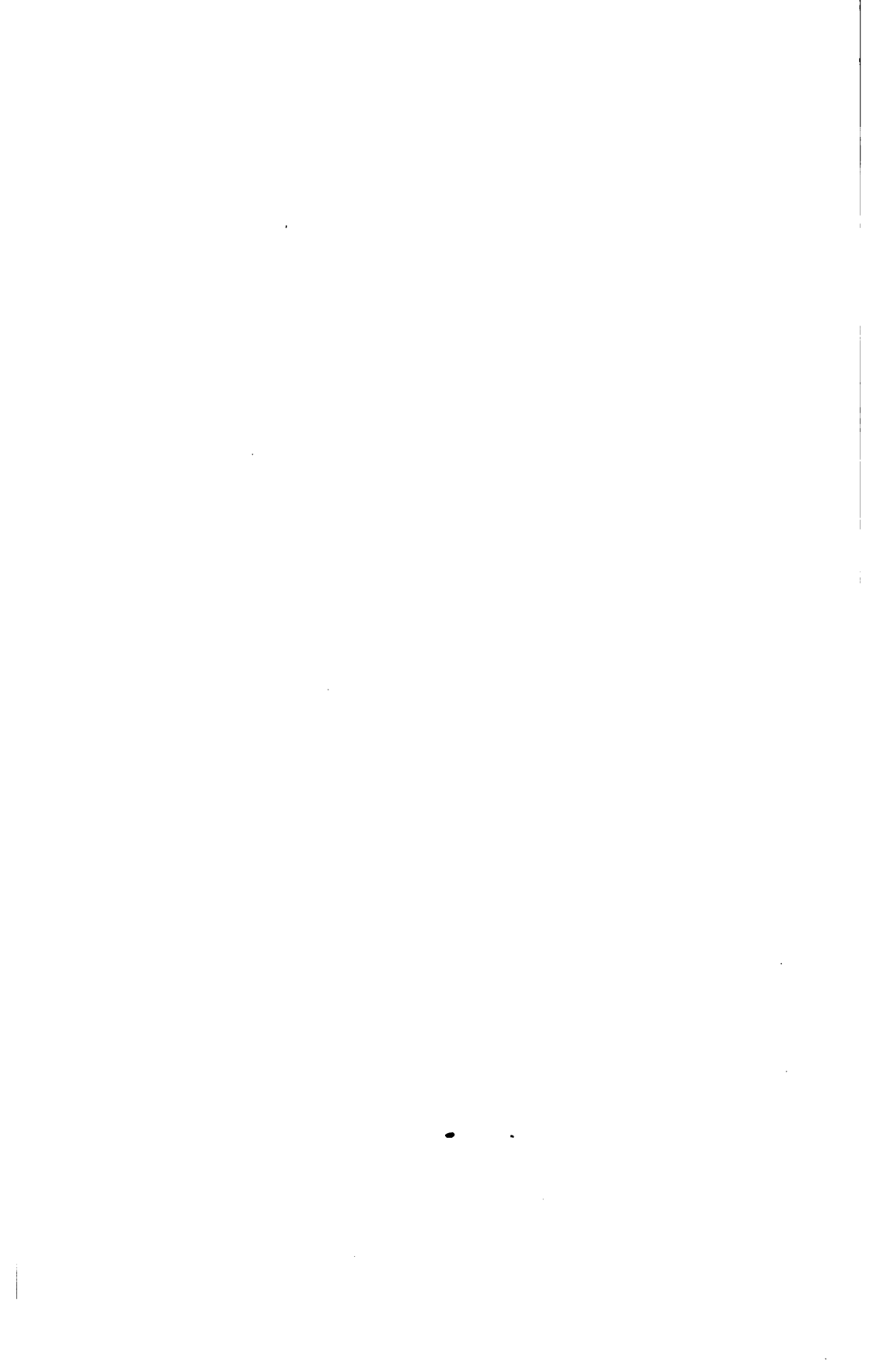
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Professor J. Lewis Diman, D.D.

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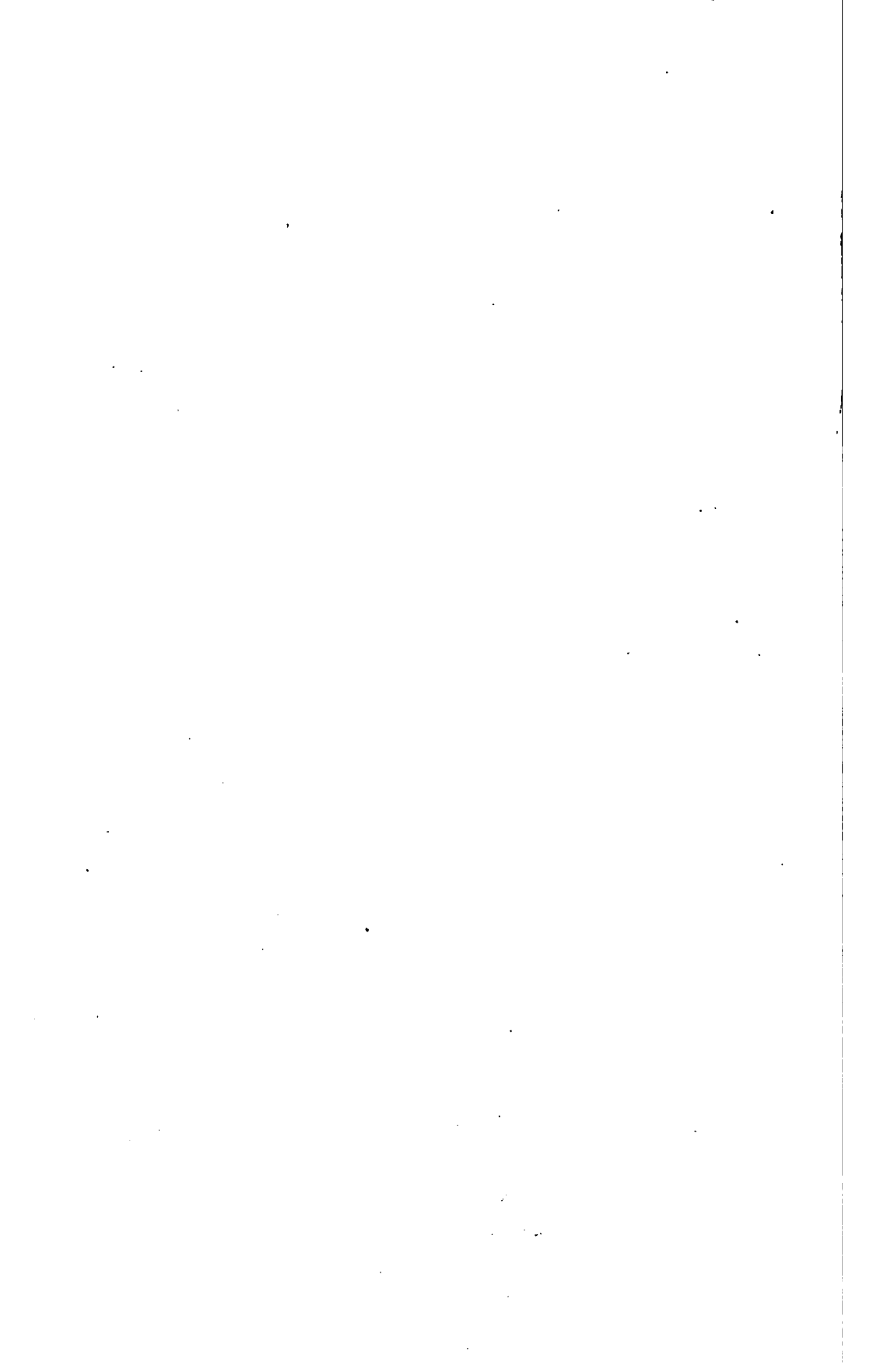
MEMORIAL TRIBUTE

BY

EDWARD J. YOUNG.

[REPRINTED FROM THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL  
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## MEMORIAL TRIBUTE.

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THE tidings of the decease of Professor Diman have come to us so unexpectedly that they have filled our hearts with grief which words are altogether inadequate to express. He had such vitality and vigor, he was in the midst of so many important and varied labors, and he had before him such prospect of high honor and usefulness, that we can scarcely believe that his sun has been darkened in mid heaven, and that his career is for ever closed on earth. By his departure, the university with which he was connected has lost its most brilliant ornament; the cause of letters, and the department of history especially, are bereaved of a distinguished writer and scholar; the church mourns the translation of a thoughtful and impressive preacher, an able philosophical thinker, a sound and learned theologian; the State also has been deprived of one who was held in great esteem, who had illustrated her annals by his writings, and who would doubtless, if he had been spared, have given added lustre to her fame; while the city where he lived misses now her first citizen.\*

It is difficult for me to speak of him, for he was so accomplished and rare a person, with so few equals, that the simple

\* "No man living in this city or State," said the Providence Journal, "could be counted his superior."

truth may seem like exaggeration to those who did not know him. But the impression which has been made by his withdrawal from earthly labors proves that a bright light has been extinguished, and that a man has been taken from us of no ordinary worth and excellence. The entire community where he dwelt has been in mourning. In the college chapel on the morning after his death there was an unusual hush and stillness at prayers, the President was so affected that he was unable to proceed with the devotional services, and the students felt that they had met with an irreparable loss, and that a most valuable part of the institution had been taken away. The pulpit and press gave voice to the sorrow which pervaded all classes. Notice of the sad event was taken also in the Legislature, and the House of Representatives adjourned, after fitting tributes had been paid to this private individual, who had not yet reached fifty years of age.

He had come rapidly into prominence during the last few years, and so well had he met the requirements of every position that his friends anticipated for him the highest distinction and service; and it has been said that the most honorable station in the gift of the State would have been his, if he would have been willing to receive it. He stood in the front rank as a public speaker, and he was repeatedly invited to deliver historical and literary addresses in his own and other cities. Three times he was offered a professorship in Harvard University, and he was consulted in regard to the acceptance of the office of Provost of the University of Pennsylvania. But he had little to gain by a removal to any other place, for he was fast making his chair of history one

of the most influential in the country, and he was unsurpassed as a teacher and inspirer of young men. He believed, moreover, that a small college possesses certain advantages which are not attainable in a large one.\* From what he had accomplished there is every reason to think that, if his life had been prolonged, he would have become one of the foremost men of his day. And now, when he had just reached the height of a noble manhood, and honors were multiplying upon him, and he was thoroughly appreciated at home and abroad, he has been suddenly snatched away in the full maturity of his powers, leaving a vacancy in his family, in society, in the academic, literary, and religious world, which it is impossible to fill.

There is no single, salient quality which is conspicuous above all others in the constitution and character of our friend. He was so well-proportioned and well-balanced, so free from all extravagance and singularity of any kind, that

\* In a speech acknowledging the degree of Doctor of Divinity, which had been conferred upon him by Brown University, he declared: "My own experience induces me more and more to respect the system of training and the general method of culture which has prevailed here for years, which has, as you are well aware, some distinctive features. I believe that the question as to the number of students is a subordinate question." His own *Alma Mater*, he said on another occasion, "in the strictness of her requirements and in the thoroughness of her training, stands fully abreast the foremost universities of the land; and in the solid work of class-room instruction, which is confessedly the most valuable feature of college education, she is surpassed by none." The general grounds for his conviction he expressed in an address in these words: "Unless mind touches mind there will be no heat. A genial, opulent, overflowing soul is the secret of success in teaching. To have read Euripides with Milton were better than having the latest critical edition. Hence the advantage in a college of smaller numbers, where the students, brought into daily familiar contact with superior minds, may catch unconsciously the earnestness, the urbanity, the kindred glow, which only such personal contact can communicate."

he seemed like a finished statue which charms us by its symmetry and grace. With a commanding personal presence, a refined intellectual countenance, a mind enriched with the fruits of study, travel, and intercourse with the best society, a delicate and cultivated taste, dignified and yet affable in his manners, he presented almost the ideal of a Christian scholar and gentleman, —

“ A combination, and a form, indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal,” —

in the complete and harmonious development of physical, intellectual, and moral powers.

He set a high standard for himself, and constantly approached the realization of it. He grew steadily, and improved upon himself. He was polished to the last degree, — *homo factus ad unguem*, — and he advanced continually until he gained a place in public estimation which we had never supposed that he would reach. In the lecture-room and on the platform he held the attention of his audience by the high treatment of his theme. His discourses were marked by clearness of thought, felicity of diction, comprehensiveness and fairness of statement, aptness and beauty of illustration. He satisfied the most critical at the same time that he captivated the multitude. He never resorted to any rhetorical tricks or artifices. He presented the truth in its native garb, knowing that thus it would commend itself to his hearers. His delivery was faultless. He spoke latterly without notes, and without memorizing what he had written. His success was a surprise even to his friends. His orations were worthy

of the occasion. They impressed us as coming from an unusually gifted mind, which communed with the first masters. He had studied systems and institutions, and he excelled in setting forth and discussing the fundamental principles underlying them. No one could reproduce a past epoch, delineate its characters, group its facts and trace them to their causes, and show how through them all "an increasing purpose runs," more successfully than he.

As he had himself the highest culture, so he appreciated the best minds and thoughts. He enjoyed the society of scholars, and delighted in intellectual tournaments, whether carried on in the friendly meetings of a club, or in the pages of a review. His large and varied acquirements isolated him somewhat from others. But he was very companionable with those who had tastes kindred with his own. He had an inexhaustible fund of pleasantry and mirthfulness, which enlivened his conversation and made his society delightful, and he always seemed to be light-hearted, and never oppressed by any cares. His power of irony and delicate sarcasm was very effective in exposing unreal pretensions and false statements, and he could easily demolish them by making them appear ridiculous. This was keenly relished by the students, though it made them stand somewhat in awe of him.

He was broad and catholic in his sympathies, and he sought only to find and to announce the truth. He was not a partisan or sectarian. He took large views of every subject, contemplating it on all sides. His liberality was not indifference or indefiniteness. No one believed more firmly in the importance of convictions, and no one was more ready

than he to give an answer for his own. He investigated for himself, going always to the original sources, and he did not simply echo the thoughts of others. He occupied an independent position. He was especially qualified to be a teacher of history, since, while he valued the past, he was in full sympathy with the present, and since he had an eminently impartial and judicial mind. To him human history was an organic whole, and he recognized the continuity of its development, and traced beneath its ever-changing waves the under-current of a divine plan and purpose. He would have agreed with Bunsen, that history is a sacred epic or drama, of which God is the poet, humanity the hero, and the historian is the philosophical interpreter. Speaking of the church, he affirmed: "In the spirit of a comprehensive religious hospitality we are bidden to count no faith common or unclean that has ever served as a bond of sympathy between the soul and its unseen Creator. Looked at in this light, all history is invested with sacredness. In men's changeful experience we are saluted with signs of a divine presence, and the consciousness of the race becomes a progressive revelation of the Infinite Spirit." He was admirably fitted, both by temper and knowledge, to write the religious history of the country, as is proved by the elaborate article on this subject which he furnished to the "North American Review." "The religion of a people is, in a profound sense," he declared, "a part of its history, and results in phenomena to which the mere political student cannot afford to shut his eyes."

Professor Diman was as free in uttering his opinions as he was in forming them, and, when called to act, he consulted

conscience rather than what might be for his convenience. Though he belonged to the body of Trinitarian Congregationalists, in the early part of his ministry he took part in an ordination at Channing Church, in Newton, Massachusetts, not merely on grounds of personal friendship with the pastor, but trusting, as he wrote, "that the act may be viewed as significant of an earnest desire on my own part to do what I can to put an end to the unhappy religious dissensions of New England, and to re-establish harmony and union on a truly catholic and apostolic basis." This spirit of independence and liberality subjected him to some annoyance and petty persecution. It caused him to be looked upon with suspicion as being tainted with heresy, because he would not wear a yoke, or repeat the shibboleth that was demanded of him. Had he been willing to accommodate his views to the received standards, his conformity would have brought to him instant popularity and praise. But he was not a man to palter with his integrity. He preferred to formulate his own creed, to think for himself, even though he should stand alone and be cut off from sympathy and fellowship. He felt, however, that he was unjustly aspersed. He knew that he was in accord with the best theologians of Europe, many of whom had been his teachers, and he was impatient at being proscribed by men who merely repeated the traditions of their elders, and were in no way competent to sit in judgment on him as his peers. They could not question his scholarship or ability, or doubt his Christian conscientiousness and sincerity; and, as in the case of Horace Bushnell, many of them afterwards changed their attitude towards him, and, when



they understood his position better, paid him the regard which they had at first withheld.

This principle which governed him, of being true to himself and calling no man master, furnishes the key to all that he did, and explains what might have seemed enigmatical in his action. It led him, as an instructor in Political Economy, to adopt and teach the doctrines of free trade. It enabled him to treat the topics in controversy between his own State and Massachusetts with exceeding fairness and candor, doing justice to both sides; and, though a Rhode Islander by birth and by strong attachment, to claim for Roger Williams that, and only that, which is his due, and to pronounce a judgment upon his character and services which will be sustained by the verdict of history. It prompted him, when arguing in behalf of Theism and Christianity, to abandon every weak and untenable defence, to concede what was true in the assertions of opponents, and to rest the proof on what must be regarded as impregnable foundations. He was incapable of exaggeration or misrepresentation. In his lectures on the Roman Catholic Church, he was so dispassionate and truthful that he was thought by some to be too lenient and partial, because he did not indulge in the customary invective and contempt.\*

\* In another connection he said: "The crying fault of the voluntary system is its exclusiveness; and no one can tread the nave of a great European minster, where the rich light, streaming through the painted window, bathes king and beggar alike as they kneel together before a common Maker, without feeling that American Christians have much to learn respecting the right method of worshipping that Being who is no respecter of persons. We are no foes to religious art; we see no reason why those who have the means to do it should not make the temple of God as costly and elegant as their own dwellings; but when the outlay, instead of being the free-will offering of the rich, is allowed to exclude the poor, we say, better let God be worshipped at the corners of the streets."

In his theology he was neither a sceptic nor a bigot. He belonged to the church, rather than to any denomination. He had points of sympathy with the representatives of all sects. But he could not march in a platoon or a party, or be shut up within the limits of one school. He valued his individual freedom. And he had the historic sense which led him to appreciate what has been confirmed by the judgment of the ages. He saw the relation of each truth to every other truth. He did not believe that a single mind, acting by itself, could solve the problems of existence. He never forgot that man is linked indissolubly to his race, and that whatever is subject to development must be studied not in one stage of its growth simply, but in its continuous movement, and in its connection with all that the human mind has discovered. Accordingly he maintained that the beliefs of the individual consciousness must be supplemented by those of the universal consciousness. "The teachings of this universal consciousness, as they relate to the great problems of human destiny, are the supreme lessons history has to teach. Beside them, the conquests of empires, the discoveries of new worlds even, are of small account." With these far-reaching views he could not be narrow or dogmatic, but his creed was large, comprehensive, inclusive. He believed firmly in the divine authority of Christianity, and to him Christ was the Incarnate Life and Truth. The establishment of a spiritual kingdom he held to be the great purpose of His coming. "The Gospel swells with this imperial theme." It was this Christianity which he wished to establish. "Do I fail to read the signs of the times aright," he asked, "when I affirm

that a craving to escape from partial, superficial views to the grand catholic foundations, to forsake broken cisterns for the river of God that is full of water, is the secret of the unrest that seems now characteristic of all the great families of faith? and shall I err in hailing these intellectual tendencies, which form so marked a feature of our time, as opening the way for a more adequate realization of Christ's kingdom?" Since he dissented from many of the dogmas and methods of New England Congregationalism, and disapproved the negative attitude of those who rejected what to him was essential to Christianity, it was but natural that at last, while keeping his independence, he should have been drawn to the services of that historic church which, holding the doctrines of faith, allows a large liberty in the interpretation of them, combines established order with progress, and appeals to the devout feelings of the worshipper by the symbolism of its architecture and by the impressive ritual of its Christian Year.

Our friend was, above all, religious. There was a deep vein of seriousness beneath all his wit and humor. His piety was as natural as his playfulness. He was sincerely devout and humble, and he lived in communion with the Supreme. This gave him his power as a preacher. Men felt that, when he discoursed of things divine and of the higher life, he spoke whereof he knew, and testified what he had seen. There was an atmosphere of sanctity about him which made all coarseness and irreverence impossible in his presence. He never lost his dignity in his familiarity. His influence was high-toned and elevating. It was the man more than the professor or preacher that we admired.

He was passionately fond of little children, and he would leave his work to be with them and entertain them. He fixed himself very deeply in the hearts of all who loved him, and with his increasing honors never lost his simplicity and ingenuousness. What a vacancy has been made by the removal of so true and pure a soul, no one can realize who has not seen him in his family, and known his sweetness of character, his affectionateness, his devotedness. But the loss is great likewise to society and the church, since he combined in an eminent degree culture and faith, commended Christianity to scholars, and commanded respect when he spoke on the high themes of reason and religion. As it was said of Schleiermacher, that he had once more introduced the Deity into good society in Berlin, so he who has gone from us was a mediator between the conflicting tendencies of thought which prevail at the present day, and he could gain a hearing for Christian truth from those who might otherwise turn away from it. His Lowell Institute Lectures and a volume of his sermons will doubtless be published; but, in consequence of his using only brief memoranda in delivering his historical lectures, these, which were his chief work, cannot be given to the world. What has already appeared in print, however, is sufficient to show the quality of his mind; and his orations at Cambridge, Providence, and Bristol, will compare favorably with the best that have been pronounced on similar occasions. He was fitted for a higher sphere of service, and he has now entered upon it.

“ Why should we mourn, albeit we know his peer  
 Perchance among us shall not come again ?  
 Let us be thankful rather for the life  
 Whose mission was to gladden hearts of men.

“ Death cannot rob us of the joy he gave,  
 Which came to the world-wearied as a staff  
 To strengthen and sustain, — but after all  
 His noble life is his best epitaph.”

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Professor J. Lewis Diman, D.D., son of the late ex-Governor Byron Diman, was born in Bristol, Rhode Island, May 1, 1831. He graduated at Brown University in 1851, and at Andover Theological Seminary in 1856, having in the meantime spent two years in Europe, studying at the universities of Halle, Heidelberg, and Berlin. He was for four years pastor of the First Congregational Church in Fall River, and for four years was settled over the Harvard Church in Brookline, Massachusetts. In 1864 he was appointed Professor of History and Political Economy in Brown University, where he remained seventeen years. He died, after a brief illness, in Providence, Rhode Island, Feb. 3, 1881.

His principal publications are the following : —

“ Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” Doctrine unto Life. A Sermon printed in the “ Monthly Religious Magazine,” September, 1863.

The Nation and the Constitution. An Oration delivered before the City Authorities and Citizens of Providence, July 4, 1866.

The Christian Scholar. A Discourse in commemoration of the Rev. Robinson Potter Dunn, D.D., Professor of Rhetoric and English Literature. Delivered, at the request of the Faculty, in the chapel of Brown University, Oct. 16, 1867.

The Method of Academic Culture. An Address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society of Amherst College, July 6, 1869. Printed in the "New Englander," October, 1869.

The Historical Basis of Belief. In the Boston Lectures on Christianity and Scepticism, 1870.

Religion in America, 1776-1876. In the "North American Review," January, 1876.

The Alienation of the Educated Class from Politics. An Oration before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Cambridge, June 29, 1876.

The Capture of General Prescott by Lieutenant-Colonel William Barton. An Address delivered at the Centennial Celebration of the exploit, at Portsmouth, Rhode Island, July 10, 1877. Published, with Notes, in No. 1 of Rider's Rhode Island Historical Tracts.

Address at the Unveiling of the Monument to Roger Williams, erected by the City of Providence, Oct. 16, 1877.

Address at the Dedication of the Rogers' Free Library in Bristol, Rhode Island, Jan. 12, 1878.

Address at the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the Settlement of the Town of Bristol, Sept. 24, 1880.

He edited "John Cotton's Answer to Roger Williams," in Vol. 2 of the "Publications of the Narragansett Club"; and also "George Fox Digg'd out of His Burrowes," constituting Vol. 5 of the same "Publications."

He furnished many leading articles for the Providence "Journal," and was a contributor to the "Nation" and other papers. Lectures, which he delivered but which have not been published, are —

The Genius of John Bunyan. Newport, 1852.

Commerce — as one of the great elements of the prosperity and success of nations. Fall River, 1858.

The Relation of the True Idea of a State to its Welfare. Providence, before the Literary Societies of Brown University, 1858.

Sir Harry Vane. Bristol, 1865.

The Present Position of the Workingman in the Nineteenth Century. Providence, 1868.

The Decline of the Religious Sentiment. Amherst, 1869.

Poetry in Education. American Institute of Instruction, 1870.

Teachers' Culture, 1873.

Church and State in Germany, 1874.

The Relation of the Ottoman Empire to European Politics, 1876.

Moorish Art in Spain.

Twenty Lectures on the Thirty Years' War, delivered before the professors and students of Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland, 1879.

Twelve Lectures on Theism, delivered at the Lowell Institute in Boston, 1880.

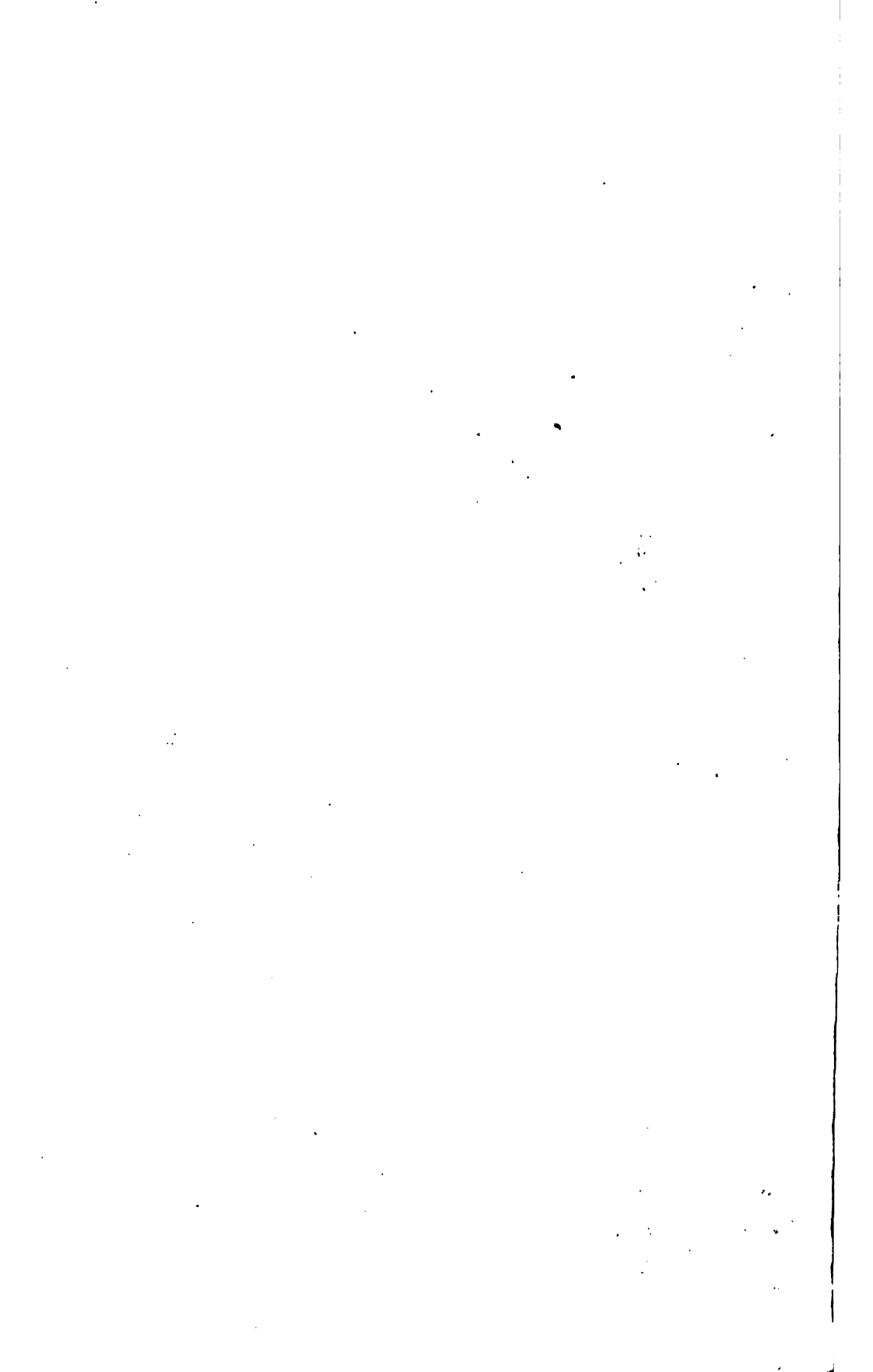
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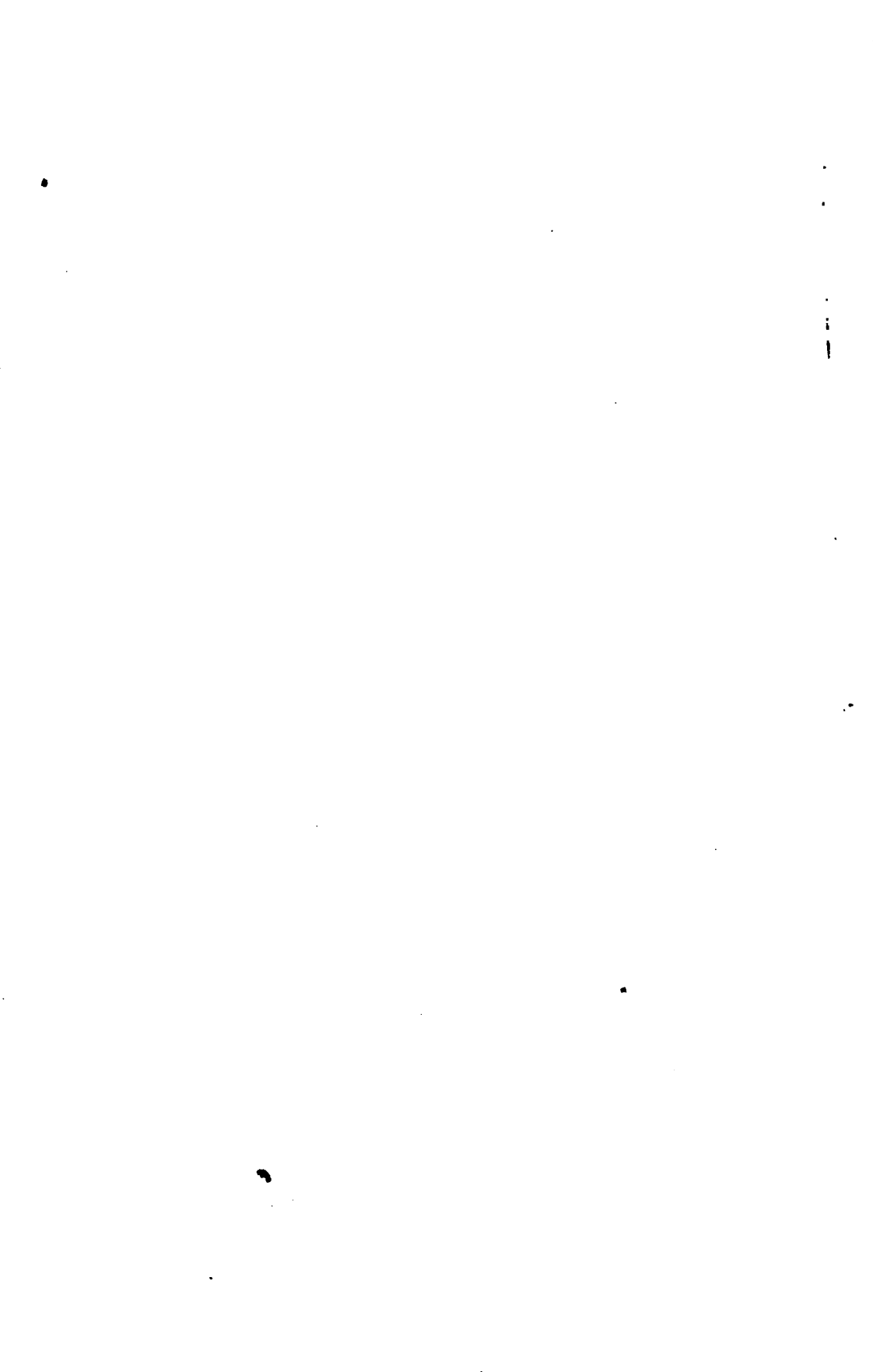
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